

AN IDEAL COURTSHIP

By JAMES MACRAE



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FOREWORD

THE poem here submitted to the public is a story of two young persons in widely separated parts of Canada who, apparently by accident, became acquainted, and in course of time were engaged to be married. It is interesting as an example of one young man who well understood the nature of Christian marriage as divinely instituted, and who, from the first moment that he felt himself called to that holy state, consistently sought the divine guidance in every detail of his preparation for it. His example may serve also as a rebuke to the thousands who seem to ignore the responsibilities and obligations imposed by that state, and who, from neglecting the only means of ensuring peaceful and happy unions, are easily led, through discouragement at their ill success, to connive at Cæsar's annulment of the Christian law, or, through selfish motives, to avail themselves of modern inventions to thwart the Creator's designs.

JAMES MACRAE

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HOLY Raphael, who of old vouchsafed Tobias safe to
guide,
And who later down the ages led across the ocean wide
Those disciples of Columba who from Scotia's moun-
tains, grand,
Brought the gospel of Iona to our dear Canadian land;*
Guide of wanderers who seek thy light and aid, do not
refuse
Over stormy seas but dimly known to guide my wan-
d'ring muse,
As I strive to scale Parnassus, on its dizzy heights to
roam;
With thy holy inspiration to assist me deign to come.

'Tis my aim my brother mortals to that blessed home to
guide
Which thy erring brother spirits once did forfeit by their
pride.
Safely bring my little shallop to the goal that lies before,
As thou brought'st the ship that bore my sires to this
Canadian shore;
Let me start from where thou led'st them, where their
children lisp thy name,
And the temple they erected stands to glorify the same;

*Rev. Father Macdonald who accompanied the Scottish Immigrants to Canada, put the vessel in which they sailed, and the passengers, under the protection of St. Raphael, "The guide of the wanderers."

Where the shadow of St. Finnan's, like a holy mantle
spread,
Stretches o'er the silent mansions where they slumber
with the dead.

Let me find the cause most fruitful of the sins of married
folk,

Of the miseries and troubles that make rough their
galling yoke

That with this my rambling story I may finally succeed
In prescribing for their benefit the remedy they need.

In their careless preparation for their holy state we find
That the votaries of Hymen are rash, negligent and
blind;

That their motives for embracing it unworthy are and
base;

And to God above they pray not for His guidance and
His grace.

In their rash and thoughtless folly, down the cup of love
they drain,

Nothing for the years that follow but the bitter dregs
remain.

Did ye take a little swallow where it sparkles near the
brim,

Ye who throng the shrine of Cupid, 'twere more wise
for you, I deem.

It would heat your wedded love and stretch the honey-
moon to years,

And your cheeks when faded would be marked with
smiles instead of tears.

Ah! did lovers for their unions but prepare one half as
well

As do other men and women for the altar or the cell,

This would be another world, and in it never-ending
peace,
For the wrangling and the quarrelling of families would
cease.

On a bank of River Garry where its waters gently flow,
Near a widely famed historic town, some sixty years ago,
Mary Campbell with her parents and eleven children more
Lived content and passing rich with very little wealth
or store.

Mary was the youngest of them, so she was her parents'
pet,
And the best of care and training they determined she
would get,
But apart from worldly comfort their design and chief
desire
Was to form her as a model for the public to admire.

Both the public school and convent were within their
easy reach,
So they planned to take advantage of the both of them,
and teach
What they deemed the most important of the training
of the two;
But the convent was to follow when the other was gone
through,
The non-Christian to prepare her for a prosperous career,
And the convent as auxiliary to polish or veneer,
And to fit her for society of higher class and tone.
They themselves would teach religion as is written
further on;
But a godless education will not guide us or restrain,
Though by it we travel faster like a horse without a rein.

Like the kite described in fable, when we fly up in our
pride,
By the wayward wind of passion we are flung into the
tide.

Mary's father was an easy-going and good-natured soul,
With endowment of a temper that was easy to control.
To contend or stand for principle was idle in his sight;
He preferred on all occasions the expedient to the right.
He was neither cold nor hot, and what his mind the
most perplexed,

Was to get the utmost from this world and forfeit not
the next.

In his conduct he essayed to steer by every easy means
Right along the line between the venial and the mortal
sins.

In his mind 'twas all surveyed—he, by some standard of
his own,

Thought he knew about it more than did St. Thomas or
Perrone;

And he needed not a college or great volumes on his
shelf.

What he learned not from his neighbors he determined
for himself.

O'er good works he did not worry, for his wife had stored
away

Quite enough the debt he owed for little venial sins to pay
After cancelling her own; and neither had a mortal sin;
So he had a better chance than most, the hoped-for
crown to win.

Mary's mother was a pious woman in a foolish way,
More devout than dutiful; on great occasions any day,

She'd attend the solemn services at church, sedate and
grave,

Thump her breast, gesticulate and sigh; nay sooner would
she brave

Showers of pitchforks than let such a chance of gaining
merit pass.

Ordinary Sundays, she would pray at home and miss the
Mass,

If she chanced to see a little cloud around the sun or moon
Pray she would and fondly kiss her beads from nine
o'clock to noon;

Then she'd visit round, her neighbor's reputations to
besmirch,

And attribute evil motives to the folks who went to
church.

But dire woe betide her children should they on the
Sabbath day

Laugh or scream too loud or inadvertently attempt to
play.

And if any one contended for a Christian school, her plea
For the godless school would be a long emphatic "Look
at me."

Oft she fasted when not hungry, but in Advent or in Lent,
If her breakfast was not early, then her head with pain
was rent.

In the angel's book she knew she had at least an even
score,

And that death, whene'er it came, would land her on the
blissful shore,

Though the penance of St. Anthony would scarcely half
atone

For the ceaseless slanders and backbitings of her tongue
alone.

Nearly all the knowledge of religion Mary did acquire
From her parents was a weekly Sunday lecture from her
sire.

When about to be confirmed, she with the catechism
was crammed,

But the whole of it in twenty days into her head was
jammed,

And of course, it was forgotten just as fast as it was
learned.

But by constant toil and study at her trying task she
earned

The attractive hat they promised if she passed, or did
as well,

In the test for confirmation, as her neighbor, Lucy Bell.
So the father quite exultant, since his daughter stood
the test

In essentials so adeptly, planned himself to do the rest.

More about the common doctrines would not be of any
use,

So he taught her casuistry and theology abstruse;
All the secrets of the angels and their actions he laid bare,
And why mankind were created just exactly as they are;
How and why the good Creator our redemption here
did plan,

Why the Son and not the Father or the Spirit became
man;

How much, even to a hair, the Lord himself would have
to yield,

If the Virgin her consent to be His mother had withheld;
And how He would be compelled to find a substitute
some way,

If poor Judas had resisted the temptation to betray;

Where the line between the lighter and the grievous
sins should run,

And how many venial sins it takes to make a mortal one;
How the evil in this world was all predestined to come in,
And if Eve had not consented to transgress, who would
begin;

And if Lazarus was married when his shortened death
he died,

When he rose would it be right for him to take another
bride?

And as to his former partner, would she still have to
remain

A dejected, lonely widow till he married her again?

He explained, in short, to Mary, most minutely and
precise

What the Lord would do in all contingencies that might
arise.

Through the mazes of religion and morality he sped,
Headlong rushing undismayed in paths that angels dare
not tread;

Until he did Mary's open mind so thoroughly prepare
That the devil any effort to ensnare her soul might spare.

Mary's mother, that no chance of gaining merit might
be lost,

Taught her all the indulgences proclaimed on earth since
Pentecost,

And as many more that were not granted and that never
will;

So that Mary, when her pious mother filled the lengthy
bill,

Could obtain a plenary indulgence fifty times a day
And a partial one for almost every prayer she could say.

As for saints, she had them scattered over Hades through
and through,
Heaven, purgatory, all the limbos that the fathers knew;
Even down in hell she managed so minute a search to
make,
That she found a few concealed who were condemned
through some mistake.
Prayers were to be said at every angle down to a degree;
And she had to make a few obtuse ones with a single
knee.
Some were to be said in weather fair, and some in raging
storms,
Some with one or both eyes closed, and more in diverse
shapes and forms.

Mother Nature was to Mary very liberal and kind,
As to symmetry of frame and dispositions of the mind.
A complexion clear as crystal and a figure fine in form,
With a dower of handsome features which the coldest
heart would charm.

It is said that human eyes are but the windows of the
soul,
Which of course is true; but oh, that eye was in itself a
soul.
She required no false addition to her wealth of auburn
hair,
Artificial paint or powder, for the natural was there,
And so laid in due proportion and in such a perfect state,
That no fingers skilled in toilet e'er could hope to imitate.
She was merry and vivacious, sympathetic, kind and gay,
Anxious to oblige and please her choice companions
every way.

For the young aspiring man who longed to breathe the
tender tale,
Just to see her was to love her, but it turned her rivals
pale;
And the slightest skill in courtship to discerning minds
might tell
At their frolics and all other such amusements she was
belle.
But her mind was not cast-iron, but a soft and plastic
gold,
Which a partner wise and prudent to a proper shape
could mould.
She but little knew about the world, its trials or its cares;
Less about its great temptations, dangers or entrapping
snares.
Her ambition, her desires and hopes, were circumscribed
and bound
By the visible horizon of the little world around.
So if tested by distressing trials she might sadly fail;
In the strong wind of temptation she might stray before
the gale;
Thus the atmosphere surrounding or the temper of the
same
Might determine if an angel or an outcast she became.
Though she was too modest to express them any judge
could pry
Right into her inmost yearnings through the glances of
her eye;
And a score of budding lovers slyly laboured to secure
Her affections as a treasure when her years became
mature.

But a certain Robert Fraser, an outsider, barred the way.
He was cunning and deceitful, but more polished than
were they.

His intention in coquetting was to practise how to woo;
To provoke some other fellows and to boast what he
could do.

Mary was, he deemed, beneath him in the current social
scale,

And to add to his importance in society would fail.

But of course, he told not this to many people thereabout;
Yet he told it to his cousin, and the two of them fell out.
Then to me the cousin told it. I consented when he said
“Now be sure that you will mention it to none till I am
dead.”

He enjoyed a big annuity, so lived till he was old;
That is why this tale of mine so long a time remained
untold.

Robert's slight acquaintance with his girl was just
enough to whet

His desire for more; the problem for him was how this to get,
For to reach her habitation he had many steps to go
And the means of locomotion in those days were rough
and slow.

The effect of muddy highways on his visage and attire
Might displease the lady's fancy and provoke her father's
ire.

Mary now was at the convent to prepare for her debut
In that stratum of society her parents had in view.
He went to the Christian Brothers' school and both
playgrounds adjoined;
So he schemed to correspond with her, and many phrases
coined,

Which, though Hebrew to all others, they themselves
could understand.

In his task he soon succeeded, and they had at their
command

A post office, wireless telegraph and mail route of their
own,

Which in spite of constant watchfulness, to teachers was
unknown.

Oft a message of importance reached her safely in a ball,
Which by well directed chance beside her feet would
roll or fall,

While their often-changed post office was a crevice in
the fence,

Where anonymous epistles were deposited, and whence
They were taken; but in time he found one with a note
attached,

Stating that would be her last one, for she found that
she was watched.

But the end of this their scheming left them little to
deplore,

For their childish love and school days were by this
time nearly o'er.

Yet their cunning little sport had more of trickery than
love,

For their Cupid was in infancy and harmless as a dove.
But the seed was sown, and, though it bore no outward
leaves or fruit,

It kept spreading under cover slowly creeping at the root.
And when once its course of conquest it had stealthily
begun

As we know, its roots are firmer when they're hidden
from the sun.

Anyhow, their love waxed warm and warmer, his against
his will,

And, of course, their intimacy grew accordingly, until
She was confident that Providence must surely have
designed,

That with him, and only him, her destined state of life
she'd find.

Life before her was all sunshine which no cloud could
ever mar,

And their loving hearts ill-feeling, doubt or hatred would
not jar;

Duty or responsibility her bosom troubled not,
Care or trials were not noted as she viewed her future lot.
All his suave and honeyed speeches to her simple mind
were truth;

Hope was giddy at its zenith, highly flushed the bloom
of youth,

While dame wisdom was insistent, knocking for admit-
tance there;

But in vain, for Mary then was building castles in the air.
Though her lips did not reveal them, he could easily
surmise

All the depth of her affections in her rolling, starry eyes;
They could speak more languages than any linguist well
could read—

More than fifty ways they could approve, condemn,
beseech or plead.

Happy weeks of glorious time like this too fleetingly
went round,

When her lover played her false and dashed her castles
to the ground;

Though he loved as truly and sincerely as most
lovers do,

Yet he coveted another and was straitened 'twixt the
two.

One he loved for charming looks and for her kindliness
of heart,

And the other for her goods and what she owed to human
art.

When he finally decided, Mary's claims were cast aside,
Who, with all her human frailties, was too good to be his
bride.

She was sorely disappointed, she was stunned but did
not fall,

Struck upon the rawest spot, though not so hard as was
St. Paul,

But it was alike effective in a very less degree;

She was not so much enlightened, nor so zealous as
was he.

But it brought her to her senses, or her senses to her
brought,

For it urged her on to exercise the precious gift of thought.
Conscience' thorns began to prick her, and her mind
returned to where

She was pupil at the convent and to lessons taught her
there.

But more powerful than lessons was th' example that
she saw,

For the former drag us forward, while the latter only
draw.

Though distractions made her seem when there as almost
deaf and blind,

Yet impressions made were not erased entirely from
her mind.

Some recesses still retained them, and like beasts of
bovine blood,
In her silent, lonely leisure, she had time to chew the cud.
Her attachments, hopes and failure in her mem'ry she
revolved,
Till she purposed to amend her life and even half resolved
She would drop her worldly schemes and a religious life
embrace,
When a trifling incident to change her future course
took place.

When alone at home and pouring floods the river nigh
did swell,
Crossing o'er the shaky bridge that spanned it, down
she slipped and fell.
Here I leave her as she struggles, never dreaming who is
near,
Till I briefly trace in outline an adventurer's career.
It may interest some readers, and I'll tell you now about
Why to write it I was privileged, and how I found it out.
He was thoughtful and observant, so a diary he kept
Where he noted weighty incidents each night before he
slept.
His opinions and the story of his life in it were told.
When he died, as an acquaintance of the holder I made
bold
To request it, with permission, if it ever should avail,
To employ it in the future for the purpose of my tale.
So if any of my readers to believe it should refuse,
I myself or else my heirs can this old diary produce.
But the most of this my story at the time was common
talk,

And I often watched my heroes and was slyly taking
stock

When they took, as many lovers do, their wonted evening
walk.

I can prove this by their relatives, who there are living
still,

Many on the tenth concession, near the famous gravel
hill,

Where the two Macdonalds quarrelled and a duel then
took place.

First their bullets struck each other in the middle of the
space

That divided them; they fired again; each got it in the
head,

And there was not quite a minute until both of them were
dead.

William Chisholm was a native of a province by the sea.
Of a person so reflective and so pensive as was he,
As to training and environment but little need be said.
He was urged by that within him, not by outward forces
led,

By his reason, observations and a deal of solid sense.

His environment had over him but little influence;

To the views of the majority he gave but little heed;

He was born for opposition, not to follow but to lead;

But he had the precious gift of faith to guide his steps
aright,

He might be one more Childe Harold had he lived without
its light.

But though skeptics as a rule would earthly joys too
highly prize,

He would err the other way, and would this world too
much despise;

He discerned its vain delusions, how its pleasures only
vexed,
And believed it all deceit, but as preparing for the next;
That if all at death must perish, human beings have no
end
That is worthy their ambition, or to which their hearts
can tend.
And though nothing in himself that he should boast of
he could see,
Yet he deemed that others had less judgment and were
frail as he,
And when sage experience their eyes would open, they
would find
That the world was in reality the same as in his mind.
They perhaps enjoyed more happiness because not so
discreet;
Vain appearances deceived them and they saw not the
deceit.
Oft he found that many objects sought with vehemence
and gained
Left but bitter disappointment for his labors when ob-
tained;
That the fruit which at a distance seemed the fairest of
the south,
Like the apples of the Dead Sea, turned to ashes in his
mouth;
Or if sometimes aught of pleasure from this world he
did enjoy,
It was transitory only and embittered with alloy.

Life he felt is but a burden to be borne to win the goal,
And a slime to clog and tarnish is the body to the soul.

In the literature current in our libraries and press
He could find but little wheat by delving mountain
piles of chess.

In the rash, hot days of youth he wandered far enough
to learn

That sin punishes itself with savage rigor, swift and
stern.

Oft the pains that others cause us in a short time pass
away,

But this viper of our own keeps gnawing, gnawing,
night and day;

Through the fibres of the soul this red-hot iron ever
burns,

To the path she has forsaken till she contritely returns.

Passions clamor so importunate, no person can supply

Half enough their maws insatiable to fill or satisfy;

And no matter how one labors or what riches one may
store,

All that's given them but serves to whet their appetites
for more.

Even for this life alone it is less pain to starve them out;

They are noxious weeds that should be rooted up when-
e'er they sprout.

But experience of sin compelled my hero soon to own,

Though to fall is very easy, that he could not rise alone;

Yet he finally succeeded and got on the narrow way,

When besides his puny efforts he for succor learned to
pray.

When of age to know and realize that Providence
assigned

To each person a vocation which his duty 'twas to find,

He composed a short petition which he added morn and
night
To his usual devotions asking God for grace and light;
To assist and to direct him on the course that he should
take,
And to grant a pure intention in the choice he was to
make;
Not to gratify his passions but to propagate his kind,
For the end which in creating man God had Himself
designed;
That entrancing strain of music round th' eternal throne
to swell,
And to fill the places forfeited by angels when they fell,
That in pure angelic features even daily he might see,
Right before his eyes, an image of what he should strive
to be.
He would be their guide to mould them and their minds
to fitly store,
And a patriarch be o'er them on the far elysian shore.
Parents, you have better models than the anchorites
who fled
To the silence of the desert where the pillar was their bed;
Models like to whom our Lord Himself declared we
must become
If we wish to make His kingdom for eternity our home,
And without whose cheery faces this forbidding world
of ours
Would be but a withered garden shorn of all its lovely
flowers.
See those bright and happy faces which the smiles of
love adorn,
Miniatures of their mother's as 'twas on her bridal morn.

Listen to their merry laughter, echoes of the angels'
voice.

Were our hearts as free from evil, we would too like
them rejoice.

Then direct their little feet upon the path our Saviour
trod,

Keep each pure and plastic soul a faithful image of its
God.

William sought a meet companion to beguile his vacant
hours,

An escape from lonely brooding, which in time the temper
sours;

One who'd help to bear the burdens which to carry was
his lot,

One whose virtues, dispositions, faults and failings he
had not;

One whose talents and ideals, one in short, whose head
and heart,

Would be supplements to his, or rather be their counter-
part.

He was not one of the many in whose hearts the only
charm

Which is sought for with a helpmate is a castle or a farm.

His ambition was much higher, what he looked to was
the heart.

He would scorn to have for wife but the poor handiwork
of art.

None would satisfy his notions but a truly noble mind,
Which would soar above the world and would be virtuous
and kind,

So that they could live together really as two in one

To above be reunited when their mortal course was run.

As a wise and prudent lover did he value and extol
Higher than all earthly graces, those adorning heart
and soul;

The gratuities of nature, beauty, comeliness and health,
Far beyond the artificial due to human art or wealth.

And, although the former cease in time to strengthen or
adorn,

They revive in varied forms in generations yet unborn.
They receive them at their birth, and not at some
ancestor's death;

And it's nobler to transmit them than to will them or
bequeath.

Neither are they whittled down by parliamentary
decrees,

By succession dues, or legal officers' inflated fees.

What a girl could claim of riches, wealthy relatives and
such,

William little cared if they were not too many or too
much.

He believed redundant wealth the direst evil or disease
That a family or state can have; it breeds a love of ease.
Man must have the lash of want to urge him on to noble
deeds;

Providence ordained each one must thrive upon his
brother's needs.

William learned away in boyhood from some old his-
torian's pen

How one winter of indulgence weakened Hannibal's
brave men.

He observed among the nations, as grows plainer every
day,

In proportion as their wealth accumulates, that men
decay.

It is discipline and hardship fit the soldier for the fight,
Not a basking in the sunshine or carousing in the night;
So it also is with us upon the battlefield of life,
It is poverty that schools us for the labor and the strife.
While the brute may safely range beneath the most
luxurious skies,

Man cannot be wisely trusted but with limited supplies.
To the path that leads to suicide he is inclined to stray,
When he finds that he can do it in an easy, pleasant way.
There would not be many years till the extinction of our
race

If the surplus of the poor filled not the wealthy people's
place.

Though to help the poor is worthy, he should claim a
higher niche

Who would plan some honest way by which we could
relieve the rich.

Even poverty than surfeit is by far a better lot,
Yet the poor are willing to be succored, while the rich
are not.

William thought mixed marriages a danger lovers all
should shun,

That though some escape disaster it were better there
were none.

Satan helps these few to persevere and keep the proper
path,

And makes up the loss with Shylock profit from the
aftermath;

For these few successful unions serve him as a honeyed
bait

To ensnare imprudent lovers to a miserable fate.

Just as one who swims Niagara Falls to win some prize
or fame
Helps to drown a dozen others who attempt to do the
same.

To maintain a racial balance many forces counteract
One another; so with sexes, it is opposites attract.
William was assured by this that with his destined wife
he'd find
Many amiable qualities of body and of mind.

It was not to merry dances or amusements of the kind
That he went this beau ideal of his early youth to find.
The remote occasion of acquaintance with her came to
pass
Where he witnessed her devotion during vespers and at
mass.

For he learned by his experience that if she was not there,
Little mattered her good conduct or behaviour elsewhere;
And her constancy in virtue was in danger did she fail
To be present at short intervals at the communion rail.
So his circle for selection shortly dwindled to the few
Of whom each when duty called was always present in
her pew.

More important, was he thought, a girl's demeanor
when she prayed
Than her manners other times, or how correct she was
arrayed.

He was spared the sight of cutty dresses worn by females now,
Which expose much more of trunk and limbs than
savages allow.

Decency was common then, and fashions now esteemed
the most,

If displayed in congregations would disperse them as a
ghost.

High-bred ladies now parade in public decked in dresses
which

Would one versed in tales remind of Tam o' Shanter's
famous witch.

But our beauties cannot be as free and "vantee" as
was she,

For the latitude of their attire forbids them to be free.

William knew the true accomplishments from counter-
feits disguised;

Far beyond the forward bearing, coy and modest mien
he prized,

And the science of the kitchen more than culture in the
hall,

And affection for a baby than a craving for a ball.

Strict politeness in a lady he would not so much admire

As the deference she yielded to her mother and her sire;

For the first is superficial, and no longer will it last

Than until the brief excitement and the novelty are past;

While the last depends on duty and the strain of time
will bear;

All the trials and vicissitudes of time it will outwear.

One fair maiden near him William would have chosen
for his bride,

But when asked, she in the negative disdainfully replied.

He and his connections were the leading farmers in the
place,

While the sum of her endowments was her muscle,
heart and face.

Peeved that such a lowly person his long-studied plan
should thwart,
'Neath an outward calm composure he yet keenly felt
the smart.
With some other useful lessons, what he thought an
evil luck,
Served to teach him he had no monopoly of Highland
pluck.
When he later got another better suited to his mind,
To the first he sent a handsome gift because she had
declined.

The best lovers like the prophets have no honor 'mong
their own,
For their virtues cease to dazzle when their failings
become known.
Close acquaintance breeds contempt for those we know
so much about,
And exposes prematurely what must finally leak out.
This applies especially to lovers, and I would direct
Them to note that lengthy courtships have this specified
effect.
It would be much better for themselves and others if
instead
They would court less time before, and longer after they
are wed.
Better that a kindly fate the knowledge of some faults
defer
Which the sacrament of marriage would enable them to
bear.
Ladies leaving those they know of for the strangers they
admire
Often jump out of the heated frying-pan into the fire.

To alleviate somewhat the irritation of his heart,
From his relatives and neighbors William purposed to
depart;

So he left his native county and, as natural, went west.
Many places he arrived at without finding any rest;
He went onward much at random for employment here
and there,

By the water routes, by railways, without knowing why
or where.

In the midst of disappointments, to despair he gave not
way;

He was hopeful of the outcome, praying harder every day.
In some manner providential, in the end it came to pass,
Every Sunday found him in St. Finnan's temple hearing
Mass.

It was then the modest structure built in pious days
gone by,

Not the solid fine cathedral now that towers to the sky.
As he could not pray attentively however he might try,
He was there not many Sundays till our Mary took
his eye.

Though he was a stranger there, yet inward daggers
seemed to goad

Him to find out more about her relatives and her abode.
Oft he followed at a distance when she travelled home-
ward bound,

And when there, he sometimes lingered, prying secretly
around,

As a general reconnoitres who would storm a citadel;
So it happened he was nigh when Mary in the water fell.
Since what followed often happens and that all can
guess it well,

How they furthered their acquaintance 'twere super-
fluous to tell;

And I could not well describe it even if I so desired,
For my muses' flight has been so long, her weakly wings
are tired.

When she went to sip at Helicon so little she imbibed,
That the surface it can cover is minutely circumscribed;
So she dare not any energy extravagantly spend,
But meagerly distribute it and stretch it to the end.

How such eager kindred hearts in carnal friendship to
enmesh

May securely be confided to the dictates of the flesh;
But that grace and light can issue only from the throne
above

Which can purify th' intention or can sanctify such love.
So my object is the interest of lovers to direct
To a matter most important which so many now neglect.
The necessity of prayer and how God will ever guide
Those who place their trust in Him and in His promises
confide.

He will guide us on our journey if we pray and let Him
lead;

He has riches for the poorest and will grant them as we
need;

If we seek His blessed kingdom, all the rest we'll realize.
Much of forethought is a folly, though a little must be
wise.

'Tis the bravest lean the most upon the bosom of their
God,

And the strongest feel the weakest as the narrow path
they plod.

Oft the poor who trust in Heaven up the ladder lightly go,
While the rich who look down proudly tumble headlong
down below.

God is just, Who will not let the devil tempt beyond
 one's strength;
So the strong are heavy laden and as prone to fall at
 length,
As with little strength and lighter burdens are the very
 weak;
Victors are the souls who most sincerely help from
 Heaven seek.

The amounts his recent wanderings compelled him to
 disburse
Left my hero nearly stranded with a short depleted purse,
Which to lengthen and replenish would admit of no delay.
So he purposed to refill it by his earnings miles away,
And to keep up correspondence with his darling he
 would then
Have to change his vocal organs for the mailbag and
 the pen.

Any definite agreement he did not consider right,
Prudent, or becoming, on account of his financial plight;
When, as if to shorten what he deemed a very long delay,
The demise of his beloved sire a windfall sent his way,
Which, although but little wind, would then have taken
 years to earn;

And a little, too, would start the matrimonial concern.
Then; the panting of the lovers' hearts made near
 enough I trow,

Yet it more produced and ran with lesser friction than
 than now.

And, in spite of dwindling numbers, keen observers fail
 to see

Any notable improvement in the present quality,

Though the people then were forced to live upon a
poorer hearth,
And knew nothing of biology or of control of birth,
Or what modernists are teaching for improvement of
the race,
Whose immoral artificial means, the natural replace.
Better that their drastic remedies before it was too late,
Had been tried upon the parents of the tribe who
advocate
The same treatment now for others. I am confident
we would
From much evil be delivered if besides we reaped no good,
For the murderous reforming crew would never have
been born
Whose destructive work o'er all the land we now have
cause to mourn.

The receipt of William's legacy enabled him and her
To prepare to reach their goal and meet expenses to
incur.
So they settled it between them and agreed they would
be wed
When they judged they could be ready, at a certain time
ahead.
At the scene of their engagement no rash liberties took
place,
Nor did he attempt to seal it with a kiss or an embrace.
Though no other soul was near enough to cause a blush
or start;
And no human eye could see, yet did they act their
solemn part

As decorously as if they saw from heaven's throne afar
God Himself look down and angels gaze through each
 bright twinkling star,

And they chose no secret bower, for the moon was rising
 high

In the lovely arch above them of a bright and starry sky.
The affianced lovers then decided morn and eve to pray
In the interval from their engagement to their wedding
 day,

And petitions like the following to Heaven they'd
 address,

That the Father, Son and Mother all their married years
 might bless:

"Holy Mary, ever virgin, Mother of the meek and mild,
To that Son divine whom thou adorest, pray for me
 thy child,

That our Jesus, as at Cana, at our marriage be a guest,
And that ours, as that in Eden, by His Father may be
 blest."

"Blessed Joseph, faithful guardian of thy spouse and
 Child divine,

Perfect model of all holiness, unto my aid incline.

If the task to rule a family by Heaven's will be mine,
Pray they may resemble slightly that most holy One of
 thine."

They decided when the day was drawing near they
 would prepare

By a general confession and a certain time in prayer.

But the ways of God are not as man's, and the divine
 decree

Permitted not the union of the lovers here to be;

Mary suddenly took sick, and human skill could no
relief

Render her in her distress, which made the tragic struggle
brief.

The distressing anguish of the spirit and the long-drawn
breath,

With attendant grievous sufferings, were soon relieved
by death.

As her illness shortly ended, it may not appear as strange,
Death upon her charming countenance effected little
change;

So that on her bier she lay as if she only were asleep,
And so natural it almost made the mourners cease to
weep.

Slowly die the old for weary years ere comes the final end;
Little leave they here to part from which their torpid
hearts can rend;

Long they learn to rightly prize the bubble world they
leave behind;

Easy 'tis for them to be entirely to their fate resigned.
But the young, who leave what most they prize and little
know about,

Have their hopes so early blasted, their delightful lives
snuffed out;

Naught enables them to part resigned from all they
dearly love

But the hope that death prepares a never-ending bliss
above.

So such deaths as hers to old and young alike are very sad,
While the old are mourned but little by the young, who
oft are glad.

So they laid her in God's acre, but it happened then and
there,
That He had not quite an acre, for the measurement was
spare.
The good people would have given Him a larger piece
of ground,
For they had it in abundance in the neighborhood
around;
But they were so clannish that they wanted very little
room
And preferred to snuggle tight together even in the tomb.
People said her grave was haunted, that some spirit
hovered round,
In appearance like a human being kneeling on the
ground.
William rued the loss of Mary and his heart was sorely
grieved,
For when hope was at its highest he was suddenly
bereaved.
So united were their hearts that scarcely death dissolved
the bond;
He essayed to follow from the grave unto her home
beyond.
While on earth he stayed so faithful to her mortal body
nigh,
Soared his spirit up in fancy to her dwelling-place on high.
In the shadows of the gloaming to her sepulchre he went,
And the night in close communion with her absent spirit
spent;
But he thought it unbecoming to let others hear or know
Of the tears that sought an outlet when unseen he let
them flow.

Of a visage slightly dour, he had unfailing love of kin,
And with manly bearing outward had a woman's
heart within.

Oftentimes his pent-up feelings in a rhyme would up-
ward wing,
And in verses like the following to Mary he would sing:

“All the green is faded over hill and dale;
And the leaves are floating down before the gale,
While the tears are flowing o'er my cheeks so pale,
For my dear departed as I weep and wail.

“Autumn's chilly winds around her careless rave,
And no pretty blossoms on her bosom wave;
And the grass is withered on her lonely grave,
Though I oft the surface with my tears did lave.

“When the summer cometh, other flowers will spring,
Tuneful birds with gladness songs of joy will sing,
But can never pleasure to my bosom bring,
For a pang of sorrow steals through everything.

“Every breeze around me that goes whistling by
Draws another bubble from my tearful eye;
Not a lovely creature in my walks I spy
But my pining bosom heaves another sigh.

“Every charming maiden that I chance to meet,
Every angel lady breathing accents sweet,
Every modest woman on my path I greet,
For my darling lost one makes my heart to beat.

“But what tends still further to increase my woe,
Is the fear that henceforth I must live to know
That at times the stranger by her grave will go,
Who will be unconscious of the worth below.

“O, ye powers of heaven, I this favor crave:
Let me from oblivion her memory save;
And proclaim to mankind all the charms she gave,
And her many virtues on their hearts engrave.

“Does she look from heaven on my streaming tears?
Does my voice of sadness reach her modest ears?
Do my sighs of anguish pierce the heav’nly spheres,
Where a crown of glory on her brow appears?

“As she joins the angels round her Maker’s throne,
Does she see me weeping by her grave alone
With my eyes fixed gazing on the marble stone
Whose engraven letters tell her soul is gone?”

All the strain of nightly vigils proved severe enough at
length,
To impair his robust frame and undermine his health
and strength.
People knew his sad bereavement on his mind began to
prey,
And they saw by his appearance he was pining fast away.
Shrunken nearly to a skeleton was his once stalwart
frame,
All his raven locks were whitened, and his life was but a
name.

Thus he spent his lonely leisure racked with anguish and
forlorn,
Till his trials reached their end on his appointed wedding
morn.
He was at the grave as wont, but so enfeebled and out-
worn
That the broken-hearted lover from his shrine did not
return.
Friends who missed him sought to find what evil luck
did him betide;
To their diligent enquiries one they questioned thus
replied:

“There is often seen about here one was shortly to be wed,
But whose sweetheart fell with sickness and is sleeping
with the dead,
And he frequently betakes him to her grave to weep and
pray.
I myself have sometimes seen him to the graveyard
make his way.
And though all around is withered, yet they tell it who
have seen
That the grass above her bosom with his tears is growing
green;
So perhaps you might discreetly any further trouble
spare,
And the object of your searches would discover yonder
there.”

Acting on the few suggestions that the said informant
gave,
They proceeded till they found him, kneeling on his
darling's grave.

Tyrant death his work of dissolution had not finished
quite,
But they waited there not long until the spirit took its
flight.

Though so often disappointed by events beyond their
power,
They were finally united at their own appointed hour.
But so well their lives were ended, and so holy was their
love,
We may hope that they were married at the altar steps
above.
If ye lovers tell the story, be the burden of your prayers:
"May our motives be as worthy and our love as pure
as theirs."

THE END.

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